

"May every Jewish mother know..."

Dear Varda and Avinoam,

The famous phrase that ends with "...that she has put her son under the care of commanders who are up to the task," quoted from David Ben-Gurion for so many years, on so many army camp walls and posters, resonates in me since I saw and heard Daniel's direct commanders in your home.

There is nothing new in the tearful lament that nothing will bring Daniel back, and that nothing is worth this sacrifice of life. Strangely enough, perhaps something is harder than the sacrifice of your own life. And that is the feeling of sacrificing a life that you have created; a life to which you gave the breath of life, a life that you raised, cultivated, looked after, and invested everything possible – and suddenly nothing is left but an empty void.

Next to Daniel's fresh grave, Avi Karaso said to Avinoam that "they do not listen to us" with respect to the choices that our children make. Using this observation, I want to try to alleviate somewhat this feeling of sacrifice. You did not make this sacrifice. Daniel chose his own path.

Yes, Daniel chose his own path after all of the things that you gave to him and after hearing all the things that you said to him, both directly, and indirectly, for 20 years.

From the path that Daniel chose, and even more so as we learned only after his death, that the manner in which he traveled that path testify a thousand times over to the ingrained qualities that you passed onto Daniel – qualities which he knew how to amplify and to develop in directions beyond your imagination. So much for your part. From this point, Daniel took the responsibility for his path, and for his actions, upon himself.

I am convinced that those qualities were also passed on to, and are ingrained in Guy and Noga, may they live a long and good life.

I paid a great deal of attention to the battalion and company commanders.

The accumulated fatigue of a month of war without sleep was apparent with Yoav, the battalion commander, but maybe even more so the dejection, the sensitivity and the genuine deep concern.

As you know, for many years I filled this role in the reserves and met tens or maybe hundreds of battalion commanders.

Some were better and some less so. Yoav is from the better ones. Maybe from the best. I was very impressed with this man – from the way he talks, from his discretion, from his determination and from his sensitivity.

I found more than a little solace in his words. My understanding from Yoav and Sharabi, the company commander, is that your beloved Daniel was hit while under the care of commanders who were up to the task. After hearing the facts and considerations that guided them and their commanders in the decision to carry out the mission, and its actual execution, the considerations appear to me to be correct and worthy. The manner in which the battle was waged along with the weighted considerations of the commanders is no less than extraordinarily impressive. The demonstration of bravery and wisdom while engaged in a firefight, as well as decision making under difficult circumstances are not commonplace.

We read in the Passover Haggadah that, "...in every generation they rise against us to destroy us..." During the comfortable and the pleasant life that we try, successfully to a great extent, to live, it is sometimes hard to feel that also in our generation they still rise against us. After all, the reality of our daily lives is so alive, vibrant, and optimistic. This past month, to my great regret, brought us all back to reality.

The terrible toll that the defense of our lives themselves has taken is incomprehensible. Perhaps, only perhaps the understanding that Daniel, with his body, belongs to those who stand in our enemies way, and prevent them from realizing our destruction, provides if even for only a fraction of a second, a sense of relief.

Love and hugs,

Laly